

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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P R 041052 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3415

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2503

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, LA

SUBJECT: LPF CONTINUE TO LINK FORMATION OF NEW COALITION
GOVERNMENT TO AGREEMENT ON MILITARY ISSUES

REF: VIENTIANE 2454

SUMMARY: NGON SANANIKONE, WHO HAS BEEN NEGOTIATING WITH
LPF REPRESENTATIVE PHOUN SIPRASEUTH, CONFIRMED TO DCM
APRIL 4 THAT LPF IS LINKING FORMATION OF NEW COALITION
GOVERNMENT TO AGREEMENT ON MILITARY ISSUES. NGON DOES
NOT BELIEVE COALITION GOVERNMENT CAN BE FORMED BY APRIL
15 TH AS DESIRED BY SOUVANNA. END SUMMARY.

1. DCM DEAN CALLED ON NGON SANANIKONE APRIL 4 TO INQUIRE
ABOUT STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH PHOUN SIPRASEUTH.
NGON SAID THAT DURING LAST FOUR MEETINGS HE HAD DISCUSSED
WITH PHOUN PROBLEMS RELATED TO FORMATION OF COALITION
GOVERNMENT AND JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL. MILITARY
ISSUES HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO GENERAL BOUNTHEING AND FAR
GENERAL STAFF FOR STUDY. ANSWER FROM FAR EXPECTED APRIL
5. NGON SAID THAT IN LINE WITH SOUVANNA' S INSTRUCTIONS
HE HAD ASKED PHOUN TO SEPARATE POLITICAL ISSUES FROM
MILITARY PROBLEMS IN ORDER FORM NEW GOVERNMENT BEFORE
APRIL 15. PHOUN SAID HE SENT TELEGRAM TO SAN NEUA
TRANSMITTING SOUVANNA' S REQUEST BUT PHOUN TOLD NGON
CONFIDENTIALLY THAT HE DOUBTED SAM NEUA WOULD ACCEPT
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THIS APPROACH.

2. ACCORDING NGON, DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TWO SIDES ON 23- MAN COALITION GOVERNMENT HAVE NARROWED DOWN TO TWO PRINCIPAL ISSUES: (A) LPF INSISTENCE THAT SOUPHANOUVONG BE MADE VICE PRIME MINISTER AND (B) LPF DESIRE TO HOLD NUMBER ONE SLOT IN MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. NGON HAS TURNED DOWN LPF ON BOTH COUNTS.

3. ON JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL, ONLY REMAINING DIFFERENCE IS LPF INSISTENCE THAT IT BE GIVEN PRESIDENCY. LPF JUSTIFY THEIR POSITION ON GROUND THAT SOUVANNA WILL BE PRIME MINISTER IN NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT AND LPF SHOULD THEREFORE HEAD COUNCIL, NGON SUGGESTED THAT PRESIDENCY OF JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL ROTATE BETWEEN TWO SIDES, BUT PHOUN HAS REJECTED THIS OFFER. BOTH SIDES AGREE THAT BODY BE COMPOSED OF 30 PERSONS REPRESENTING 10 FROM VIENTIANE, 10 LPF AND 10 " NEUTRALS".

4. ALTHOUGH NGON AND PHOUN HAVE NOT YET DISCUSSED IN DEPTH MILITARY ISSUES, THEY HAVE TALKED ABOUT DEMILITARIZATION OF LUANG PRABANG AND VIENTIANE. NGON SAID THAT RLG AGREES WITH LPF SUGGESTION TO ESTABLISH JOINT POLICE PATROLS IN BOTH CITIES(300 IN LUANG PRABANG AND 500 IN VIENTIANE). HOWEVER, LPF IS ALSO INSISTING ON WITHDRAWAL OF ALL MILITARY FORCES FROM THESE TWO CITIES AND LPF IS SUGGESTING THAT ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF BATTALIONS BE AUTHORIZED TO BE MAINTAINED IMMEDIATELY OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS. RLG HAS REJECTED THIS POSITION. LPF HAS ALSO PROPOSED BANNING ARMED AIRCRAFT FROM VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG AIRPORTS AND NGON HAS NOT OBJECTED TO THIS SUGGESTION. HOWEVER NGON HAS REITERATED RLG OPPOSITION TO LINKING AGREEMENT ON DEMARCATION LINE FOR AREAS HELD BY THE TWO SIDES TO IMPLEMENTATION OF POLITICAL CLASUES OF AGREEMENT BECAUSE DRAWING SUCH A LINE WILL TAKE TIME AND WOULD POSTPONE SINE DIE IMPLEMENTATION OF OTHER ASPECTS OF VIENTIANE AGREEMENT.

5. NGON WILL BRIEF CABINET THIS AFTERNOON ON RESULTS OF HIS MEETINGS WITH PHOUN MAKING FOLLOWING OVERALL POINTS:

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A. LPF DOESNOT APPEAR TO BE WILLING TO SEPARATE

POLITICAL FROM MILITARY ISSUES THEREBY BLOCKING IMPLEMENTATION OF THOSE ASPECTS OF VIENTIANE AGREEMENT ON WHICH TWO SIDES CAN AGREE.

B. THIS MEANS THAT PRIME MINISTER'S HOPE OF FORMING COALITION GOVERNMENT BY APRIL 15 WILL NOT BE MET UNLESS ALPF CHANGE THEIR NEGOTIATING STANCE.

C. LPF APPEAR TO BE STALLING ON FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT. WHILE NGON HAS NO FORM EVIDENCE, HE BELIEVES THAT SAM NEUA HAS BEEN PRESSURED BY HANOI TO SLOW DOWN PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF FEBRUARY VIENTIANE AGREEMENT IN ORDER TO AVOID HAVING SAM NEUA OUT OF STEP WITH SITUATION IN OTHER INDOCHINESE STATES.
DEAN

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